

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SAJ-01 MBFR-03 ACDA-19 IO-13 NIC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 EB-11 RSR-01 /143 W

----- 098739

R 301807Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7153

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: POLITICS IN BONN AT SUMMER'S END

1. SUMMARY: THE FALL TERM OF THE BUNDESTAG WILL FIND THE GOVERNMENT IN SOME DISARRAY AND ON THE DEFENSIVE IN THE AREA NOW FIRST IN THE VOTERS MIND, THE DOMESTIC ONE. THE CDU WILL SEEK TO EXPLOIT THE GOVERNMENT'S WEAKNESSES BUT ITS PROMISE OF A HOT AUTUMN WILL PROBABLY PROVE TO BE MORE RHETORIC THAN REALITY. THE GOVERNMENT'S DIFFICULTIES ARE REAL BUT NOT YET CRITICAL. END SUMMARY

2. WITH THE LONG SUMMER RECESS DRAWING TO A CLOSE, POLITICAL LIFE IN BONN IS BEGINNING TO STIR IN ANTICIPATION OF THE 'HOT AUTUMN' CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL HAS PROMISED THE SPD. THE OPPOSITION IS ACCUSING THE GOVERNMENT OF ABETTING THE NEUTRALIZATION OF GERMANY AND FAILING TO PURSUE WITH ADEQUATE ZEAL THE POLITICAL UNION OF WESTERN EUROPE. THE SPECIAL
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COMMITTEE INVESTIGATING THE STEINER AFFAIR
RESUMES ITS HEARINGS NEXT WEEK FOLLOWING A SPIEGEL

ARTICLE THAT DRAGS THE BND 9THE FRG'S (CIA) DIRECTLY INTO THE MATTER, AND WILDCAT STRIKES HAVE REACHED SUCH SERIOUS PROPORTIONS THAT THE CHANCELLOR HAS ENGAGED HIMSELF PERSONALLY IN AN ATTEMPT TO END THEM. BUT THE OPPOSITION'S ARGUMENTATION ON THESE ISSUES DOES NOT ENGENDER MUCH IMMEDIATE POLITICAL ECHO.

3. THE CDU IS QUITE AWARE OF ITS INABILITY IN RECENT YEARS TO FORMULATE A PRECISE, COHERENT PLATFORM, AND IS AT LAST APPARENTLY PREPARED TO TAKE THE STEP LEFTWARD IT QUITE DELIBERATELY CHOSE NOT TO TAKE TWO YEARS AGO. THE REPORT OF VON WEIZSAECKER'S POLICY COMMITTEE, WHICH HAS NOW BEEN CIRCULATED TO THE PARTY LEADERSHIP, DEALS AT LENGTH WITH THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF WORKERS AND DISADVANTAGED MINORITIES. AS THIS EMPHASIS ON DOMESTIC MATTERS IS SHARED BY KOHL AND BIEDENKOPF, THE PARTY'S NOVEMBER CONVENTION MAY PRODUCE ENOUGH OF A CONSENSUS TO ENABLE THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION IN THE BUNDESTAG TO SUBMIT DRAFT LEGISLATION ON SOME OF THE DOMESTIC POLICY MATTERS THAT THE PRESENT COALITION HAS BEEN UNABLE TO AGREE UPON. BUT THESE CDU INITIATIVES WILL INEVITABLY HAVE, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN, A ME-TOO FLAVOR THAT WILL ROB THEM OF MUCH OF THEIR IMPACT.

4. THE SUBJECTS OF DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE COALITION (AND WITHIN EACH COALITION PARTNER, THOUGH THE INTERNAL STRESS WITHIN THE FDP IS RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT AT THE MOMENT), ARE THE SAME AS USUAL--CODETERMINATION, PROFIT-SHARING, HIGHER EDUCATION, EXCESS REAL ESTATE

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PROFITS, TAX REFORM--PLUS THE RECENT MATTER OF RADICALS
IN PUBLIC SERVICE RAISED BY THE GOETZ AFFAIR IN
NORTHRHINE-WESTPHALIA. ON THE WEEKEND OF AUGUST 25
THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE FDP ADOPTED TEN
THESES WHICH IN EFFECT SUPPORT THE POSITION TAKEN BY
THE FDP IN NRW THAT RADICALS, I.E. SPECIFICALLY DKP
MEMBERS, SHOULD NOT BE APPOINTED TO CIVIL SERVICE.
SINCE THE SPD IN NRW HAD SOUGHT TO DO JUST THAT, THE
POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER INTRA-COALITION FRICTION OVER
THIS ISSUE IS QUITE PROBABLE, PARTICULARLY IF, AS IS
LIKELY, A MEETING OF MINISTERS PRESIDENT IN LATE
SEPTEMBER FAILS TO ACHIEVE A GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE
POLICY. THE MATTER MAY YET END UP AT THE FEDERAL
CONSTITUTIONAL COURT, BUT THAT IS STILL SOME WAY OFF.

5. INFLATION CONTINUES AT A PACE THAT A FEW
YEARS AGO ALL OBSERVERS SAID WOULD BE INTOLERABLE AT
SURPRISINGLY LITTLE APPARENT POLITICAL COST TO THE
GOVERNMENT, AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES ARE NOT SEIZING
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THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION AT ALL. IN SUM, IF THE CDU
REALLY EXPECTS TO MAKE THE AUTUMN A HOT ONE, IT HAS A
LONG WAY TO GO.
HILLENBRAND

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